# Document No. 317 Adopted at Meeting of 4/24/64

RESOLUTION OF BOSTON REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
THAT THE DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT-FANEUIL HALL PROJECT
AREA IS A DECADENT AREA

WHEREAS, the Boston Redevelopment Authority (hereinafter called the "Authority") is a public body corporate and politic duly organized and existing under the provisions of the Housing Authority Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and having a usual place of business in the City of Boston, Massachusetts; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has, with financial assistance provided under Title I of the Housing Act of 1949, as amended by the Housing and Home Finance Agency of the United States of America, undertaken and conducted surveys, studies and inspections of an area in the City of Boston known as the Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall Project Area and described in Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof (hereinafter called the "Project Area") in connection with the preparation of an urban renewal plan therefor; and

WHEREAS, an urban renewal plan for the Project Area has been prepared; and

WHEREAS, a public hearing on said urban renewal plan and project was, after due and proper notice thereof, held on April 15, 1964, at which time the Authority received and heard extensive evidence, data, exhibits, views and opinions with respect thereto, including the presentation and submission of a Project Area Report, attached hereto as Exhibit B and made a part hereof, prepared by members of the Authority's staff describing the surveys and studies undertaken, the criteria used to determine the condition of structures, and the character, physical conditions and uses of land and structures in the Project Area; and

WHEREAS, at said public hearing, all persons desiring to be heard were so heard; and

WHEREAS, the Authority has considered said evidence, data, exhibits, views and opinions, including the evidence contained in the Project Area Report as to the character and conditions of the Project Area; and

## NOW THEREFORE, UPON CONSIDERATION THEREOF, BE IT RESOLVED

- Al The Authority does hereby find and determine that an urban renewal project ought to be undertaken and carried out in the Project Area and that it is essential to the best interests of the Project and of the City of Boston that the boundaries of the Project Area be as described in Exhibit A attached hereto and made a part hereof;
- B. That the Authority does hereby find and determine that the Project Area is a decadent area in that it is an area which is detrimental to safety, health, morals, welfare and the sound growth of the community because of one or more of the following reasons and conditions, namely, because of the existence of buildings which are out of repair, physically deteriorated, unfit for human habitation and obsolete, in need of major repair, because buildings have been torn down and not replaced and in which under existing conditions it is improbable that the buildings will be replaced, because of a substantial change in business and economic conditions, because of inadequate light, air and open space, because of excessive land coverage, because diversity of ownership, irregular lot sizes and obsolete street patterns make it improbable that the area will be redeveloped by the ordinary operations of private enterprise;
- C. That, more particularly, the Authority does hereby find and determine that the character and the conditions of the Project Area as described in Exhibit B, "Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall Project Area Report", dated April 15, 1964, attached hereto and made a part hereof, are true and do exist.

The Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall Project Area is bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at the intersection of the westerly U. S. Pierhead Line of the Fort Point Channel and the southwesterly sideline of Northern Avenue Bridge and running northwesterly by the southwesterly sideline of Northern Avenue Bridge and of Northern Avenue and of Northern Avenue extended to the northwesterly sideline of the Fitzgerald Expressway;

thence turning and running northeasterly, northerly and northwesterly by the northwesterly, westerly and southwesterly sidelines of the Fitzgerald Expressway to the southwesterly sideline of Well Street;

thence turning and running northwesterly by the southwesterly sideline of Well Street to the northwesterly sideline of Custom House Street;

thence turning and running northeasterly by the northwesterly sideline of Custom House Street to the southwesterly property line extended of 37 India Street, thence turning and running northwesterly by the southwesterly property line extended and the southwesterly property line of 37 India Street to the northwesterly property line of 37 India Street, thence turning and running northeasterly by the northwesterly property line of 37 India Street and the northwesterly property line extended to the southwesterly sideline of India Street;

thence turning and running northwesterly by the southwesterly sideline of India Street to the southeasterly sideline of State Street;

thence turning and running westerly by the southeasterly sideline of State Street to the easterly sideline of Change Avenue extended;

thence turning and running northerly along the extended easterly sideline and the easterly sideline of Change Avenue to the northerly property line of the property known as 60 State Street;

thence turning and running in an easterly direction by various courses and distances along the northerly property line of said 60 State Street and continuing easterly along the northerly property line of the property known as 80 State Street and the last said property line extended in an easterly direction to the easterly sideline of Merchants Row;

thence turning and running northerly along the extended easterly sideline of Merchants Row to the southerly property line of the property known as 1 " South Market Street, which is also the northerly sideline of Chatham Street;

thence turning and running westerly along the southerly property line of said 1 South Market Street to the easterly sideline of Merchants Row;

thence turning and running northerly along the westerly property line of said 1 South Market Street, which is also the easterly sideline and extended easterly sideline of Merchants Row, to an intersection with the extended southerly property line of the property known as Faneuil Hall;

thence turning and running westerly by the southerly property line of Faneuil Hall extended and by the southerly property line of Faneuil Hall;

thence turning and running northerly by the westerly property line of Faneuil Hall and the westerly property line of Faneuil Hall extended to the northwesterly sideline of North Street;

thence turning and running in a southwesterly direction by the northwesterly sideline of North Street to the easterly sideline of Union Street;

thence turning and running northerly by the easterly sideline of Union Street to the southeasterly sideline of Hanover Street;

thence turning and running northeasterly along the southeasterly sideline of Hanover Street to the northeasterly sideline of Blackstone Street;

thence turning and running southeasterly by the northeasterly sideline of Blackstone Street to the northwesterly sideline of North Street;

thence turning and running in a northeasterly direction in a straight line to the end of the southeasterly side of the southeasterly wall of the Callahan Tunnel:

thence running northeasterly by the southeasterly side of the southeasterly wall of the Callahan Tunnel and running northeasterly by the southeasterly side of the southeasterly wall of the Callahan Tunnel extended above ground to the northeasterly sideline of Richmond Street;

thence turning and running southeasterly along the northeasterly sideline of Richmond Street to the northwesterly sideline of Fulton Street

thence turning and running northeasterly by the northwesterly sideline of Fulton Street to the northeasterly sideline of Lewis Street;

thence turning and running southeasterly by the northeasterly sideline of Lewis Street to the northwesterly sideline of Commercial Street;

thence turning and running northeasterly, northerly and northwesterly along the northwesterly, westerly and southwesterly sidelines of Commercial Street to the northwesterly sideline of Hanover Street;

thence turning and running northeasterly by the northwesterly sideline of Hanover Street to the southwesterly property line of the U. S. Coast Guard Base;

thence turning and running southeasterly by the southwesterly property line of the U. S. Coast Guard Base to the southeasterly property line of the U. S. Coast Guard Base;

thence turning and running northeasterly by the southeasterly property line of the U. S. Coast Guard Base and by such southeasterly property line extended to the U. S. Pierhead Line:

thence turning and running southeasterly and southerly by the U. S. Pierhead Line to the point where said Pierhead Line swings from a southerly to a southwesterly direction;

thence turning and running southwesterly in a straight line to the point of beginning.

#### DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT-FANEUIL HALL PROJECT AREA REPORT

The Project Area is bounded generally by Northern Avenue, Fitzgerald

Expressway, Well Street, India Street, State Street, Change Avenue, Merchant's

Row, Dock Square, Union Street, Hanover Street, Blackstone Street, North

Street, Callahan Tunnel Entrance, Richmond Street, Fulton Street, Lewis

Street, Commercial Street, Hanover Street and the U. S. Pierhead Line.

The boundaries of the area are specifically described in the Notice of Public

Hearing, Exhibit 1, and are shown on the map entitled, "Existing Land Use",

Exhibit 2.

The proposed Project Area is an area of longstanding interest on the part of the community. Detailed studies were initiated in 1961 under the sponsorship of the Waterfront Redevelopment Division of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and were continued during 1962 and 1963 by the Chamber's Downtown Waterfront Corporation. Also in 1961, survey and planning studies of the Project Area were undertaken by the Boston Redevelopment Authority during the preparation of a General Neighborhood Renewal Plan for the northernmost section of the downtown peninsula. During 1963, studies were continued by the Authority to further evaluate the character and condition of the urban renewal area as a whole. These studies included, among other things, an investigation and analysis of existing land use, building conditions, environmental conditions, and social and economic characteristics. Sources of survey and study data included the U. S. Census of Population and the U. S. Census of Housing of 1960 and previous census periods, Sanborn Atlas, records and studies of the Boston City Planning Board, the Assessing, Building, Real

Property, Parks and Recreation, Health, Fire, Police, Traffic, and Public Works Departments of the City of Boston, and actual field surveys made both by and for the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

The information gathered was analyzed by the staffs of the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the Downtown Waterfront Corporation in formalizing the urban renewal plan for the Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall Project.

To qualify for Federal assistance, the Project Area must contain certain building deficiencies of such degree and extent that public action is necessary to eliminate and prevent the spread of deterioration and blight. Such serious deficiencies include:

- 1. Defects to a point warranting clearance.
- Deteriorating condition because of a defect not correctable by normal maintenance.
- 3. Extensive minor defects which, taken collectively, are causing the building to have a deteriorating effect on the surrounding area.
- 4. Inadequate original construction or alterations.
- 5. Inadequate or unsafe plumbing, heating, or electrical facilities.
- 6. Other significant building deficiencies.

The buildings within the Project Area with one or more of these deficiences are shown on the map entitled, "Building Conditions", Exhibit 5.

A complete exterior and interior examination of buildings in the Project Area was conducted by survey teams of the Boston Redevelopment Authority between May and December of 1963. During this period, a detailed exterior examination of all buildings was completed and an interior examination of all buildings was made, except for 22 buildings where an interior examination was not conducted or only partially conducted because of one of the following reasons: the building was locked and the owner was not located; entry to the building was refused; entry to a part of the building was refused; the building was being renovated.

Completed Building Examination Schedules, used in the field survey of interior and exterior building inspections are available for inspection and review, Exhibit 4. All buildings for which these schedules were used were examined for the following.

- 1. Existence of two means of egress.
- 2. Total number of toilets in the structure.
- 3. Inside walls or ceilings with any or all of the following conditions:
  - a. Easily seen cracks
  - b. Holes or badly worn surfaces
  - c. Evidence of leaks or missing plaster
- 4. Inside floors worn or sagging or in poor repair.
- 5. Sagging, missing or deteriorated doors.
- 6. Inoperable or deteriorated windows.
- 7. Type of heating.

- 8. Availability of hot and cold water in the structure.
- 9. Toilets not ventilated.
- 10. Toilet compartment not ventilated.
- 11. Evidence of vermin infestation.
- 12. Roof deteriorated or sagging or out of line.
- 13. Existence of sprinklers or other devices for fire protection.
- 14. Faulty foundations.
- 15. Basement columns or piers loose, missing or deteriorated.
- 16. Basement framing split or deteriorated.
- 17. Accumulation of combustible debris, particularly under stairways or in boiler rooms.
- 18. Boiler room not fireproof.
- 19. Boiler room not ventilated to fresh air.
- 20. Boiler room door not self-closing.
- 21. Exposed electrical panels.
- 22. Existence of elevators in multi-floor buildings.
- 23. Elevators not enclosed.
- 24. Plumbing free of leaks and corrosion.
- 25. Inside stairs with steps worn or broken or both or with rails missing or broken.
- 26. Existence of front stairways, rear stairways, fire escapes or indirect means of egress in multi-floor buildings.
- 27. Enclosed stairways.
- 28. Means of access obstructed.

- 29. Means of access to a street or alley.
- 30. Outside walls evidencing any or all of the following conditions:
  - a. Holes or badly worn surfaces, including need for repainting of brick walls.
  - b. Broken or loose surfaces
  - c. Visibly out of plumb or alignment
- 31. Merchandise delivery from street, alley or other location.
- 32. Existence of off-street loading facilities.
- 33. Existence of off-street parking on the premises.

As a result of the exterior and interior building examinations, the map entitled, "Existing Land Use", Exhibit 2, and also the map entitled "Building Conditions", Exhibit 5, were prepared.

Buildings in the urban renewal area were divided into three categories:

- 1. Buildings with no deficiencies,
- 2. Buildings with deficiencies but not substandard,
- 3. Buildings in substandard condition.

A building was determined to be substandard if any two or more of the following conditions were found to be present during the examination of the building:

 More than 25 per cent of the total area of the inside walls were cracked, and/or the base material was loose, missing and/or broken, and/or there was evidence of leaks.

- 2. More than 25 per cent of the total inside floor area sagged and/or pitched.
- 3. More than 25 per cent of the roof sagged or was out of line, and/or was loose, missing and/or deteriorated.
- 4. More than 25 per cent of the building's foundation walls were loose, broken and/or deteriorated, or sinking and/or out of line, or the basement columns and piers were loose, missing and/or deteriorated, or the basement framing was split and/or deteriorated.
- 5. More than 25 per cent of the total area of the outside walls were visibly out of plumb or line, and/or the siding was loose, missing or deteriorated.

A building was determined to be deficient if one of the major structural conditions cited above for substandard buildings was found to be present or if 25 per cent of the applicable conditions enumerated on the Building Examination Schedule were found to be present. It should be noted that where a condition was measurable in area or extent it was regarded as applicable in determining a building to be deficient only in those cases where the condition exceeded 25 per cent of the length, area or surface of the item in question as recorded on the Building Examination Schedule.

The following paragraphs describe the extent to which environmental deficiencies characterize the Project Area.

- OVERCROWDING OR IMPROPER LOCATION OF STRUCTURE ON THE LAND
  - a. Inland Blocks

Building coverage exceeds 90 per cent in interior blocks and ranges from 75 per cent to 89 per cent in most of the remainder.

Lot areas are substantially substandard for the types of wholesaling and manufacturing uses that now occupy the area.

Off-street parking is notably deficient; the lack of off-street leading is widespread. These deficiencies impede sales, good handling and business improvements dictated by modern wholesaling and merchandising practices.

### b. Waterfront Blocks

In the wharf area, building placement was premised on loading, servicing and good handling requirements of sail vessels; these are no longer existent. Therefore, while lot area per se is often sufficient, the relation of building and building's access points to street frequently reduces effective structure use. For example, the maneuvering area for heavy truck service is cramped on many present piers.

#### 2. CONVERSIONS TO INCOMPATIBLE TYPES OF USES

Much commercial space has been downgraded because of incompatible changes in use. Commercial lofts designed for marine shipping have changed to manufacturing and wholesale uses incompatible with their original designs. The old warehouse structures, now being used for wholesale food marketing operations, create, because of the inefficient goods handling and on-street loading, a blighting influence of the area.

Obsolescence is perhaps the area's basic blighting influence.
Five- and six-story, pre-1900 loft construction

dominates the district. It is no longer suitable for efficient goods handling, especially in the dominant wholesale trades.

Some warehouse buildings were built in the 1910-1920 period but are obsolete today. Conversions or abandonment of the structures' upper stories has been prompted by their elevators having failed to comply with City Building Code provisions. There is an almost total absence of off-street loading facilities in many sections and, in substantial sections of the area, no off-street parking.

Frequently, structures lack any rear access. Upper stories are generally empty and deteriorating, and multi-story construction is cited as a principal disadvantage by present occupants.

#### 4. DETRIMENTAL LAND USES OR CONDITIONS

Meat and food wholesale distributors occupy a large portion of the Project Area. Buildings in wholesale food use are old and inadequate for efficient food handling and distribution methods. The lack of direct rail service and efficient truck loading and unloading facilities create traffic problems and congestion which have a detrimental effect in the area and discourage the growth of more desirable types of uses that normally would tend to locate in this potentially high value area. The existing deterioration of many wooden piers - some already partially destroyed by fire - presents a real threat of further fire loss, as do many substandard wooden sheds along these same piers.

- UNSAFE, CONGESTED, POORLY DESIGNED OR OTHERWISE DEFICIENT STREETS 5. "The streets in the Faneuil Hall Market are all inadequate to handle the market traffic, not to speak of the non-market traffic that moves through the area; besides, there are no parking spaces except in the front of the stores." This quotation summarizes the Project Area's circulation problems. Buyers patronizing the food district lose substantial and costly time on congested, narrow streets unsuited for modern heavy traffic in large volumes. The streets themselves, together with sidewalks, curbs, and gutters, are badly substandard. There are many oblique intersections in the street pattern, a picture that is complicated by the absence of adequate sighting lines because of building locations at the street line. Vehicular use of the wharves is reduced because of the railroad's location and poor surface conditions on the wharves. Deteriorated cobblestone street surfaces are very prominent in the Internal circulation has been further complicated by the recent construction of the Central Artery and a second tube to the East Boston Tunnel. The resulting street system is inadequate and defies ready access and egress from the area's interior streets.
- 6. INADEQUATE PUBLIC UTILITIES CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNSATISFACTORY
  LIVING CONDITIONS OR ECONOMIC DECLINE

  The Project Area is marked by the severe surcharging of existing combined sewers with resulting cellar seepage, rain-filled streets

The Wholesale Produce Markets at Boston, Massachusetts, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, 1950

and discharge in the harbor. Many wooden and brick sewers are known to have failed. The area's street lighting system is in-adequate and discourages night-time activity in the area.

7. OTHER EQUALLY SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL DEFICIENCIES

Within the wharf area lie a growing number of deteriorating structures as well as hazardous, burned out and largely vacant properties whose dereliction constitutes a blighting influence. They stand as evidence of the area's general decline. Poor sanitary conditions characterize substantial portions of the area, especially the food distribution center.

The results of all surveys and studies with respect to the character and condition of the Downtown Waterfront-Faneuil Hall Urban Renewal Area can be set forth as follows.

1. The Project Area was found to be an area in which non-residential buildings were predominant. The gross land area of the Project is approximately 104.5 acres, of which approximately 45.2 acres were found to be devoted to streets and alleys, leaving a net area of approximately 59.3 acres. Of this net area, about 47.4 acres were found to be occupied by parcels with buildings and approximately 11.9 acres devoted to off-street parking. A major portion of the off-street parking is located in the Waterfront Area on wharves where deteriorated, obsolescent and fire damaged buildings have been demolished and cleared, leaving large, vacant open spaces.

- Land improved with buildings, street or other improvements was found to be distributed generally throughout the entire area.
- 2. The Project Area was found to include 433 major buildings of which 36 buildings were vacant and an additional 64 buildings were partially vacant, of which 14 had over 50 per cent vacant floor space. Many of the partially vacant buildings were found to have entire upper floor areas vacant.
- 3. The buildings within the Project Area were found to be devoted to a variety of uses, including many having mixed uses. About 28 buildings were in predominantly general office use; 55 in predominantly general business use; 79 in predominantly wholesaling, warehousing or manufacturing use (exclusive of food wholesaling); 195 in predominantly food wholesaling use; 9 in utilities or public service use; and 3 buildings in predominantly institutional or public use. Also included in this area were 28 buildings containing about 107 dwelling units.
- 4. The Project Area is solidly built up with a congested mass of obsolete structures occupying close to 100 per cent of each block, except where demolition had resulted in parking lots, particularly on the wharves. Building coverage exceeds 90 per cent on parcels located in interior blocks and ranges from 75 per cent to 80 per cent on parcels in the Waterfront Area of the project.

- 5. Of the 433 buildings, 298 buildings or 69 per cent of all the buildings in the Project Area were found to be substandard, having deficiencies of the type and degree listed above under criteria used to determine a building to be substandard; 209 or 48.4 per cent had three or more of these deficiencies; an additional 89 or 20.6 per cent had two of these deficiencies; and 88 buildings or 20.1 per cent had one deficiency. Only 47 buildings or 10.9 per cent had none of these deficiencies.
- 6. Four hundred nineteen, or 96.8 per cent of the structures in the Project Area were found to be non-fireproof construction. Only 3.2 per cent of the structures were fireproof or fireresistant.
- 7. Two hundred fifty-seven (257) or 61.3 per cent of the structures had finish worn; loose and/or missing on inside walls; in 251, or 61.0 per cent, the condition was found on inside ceilings.
- 8. One hundred eighty-nine (189) or 45.0 per cent of the structures had evidence of cracks in base material of inside walls; in 172 or 41.0 per cent, the condition was found on inside ceilings.
- 9. One hundred one (101) or 24.0 per cent of the structures had

  loose, missing and/or broken base material in inside walls; in

  102 or 24.3 per cent the condition was found on inside ceilings.
- 10. Eighty-seven (87) or 20.7 per cent of the structures had evidence of leaks on inside walls; in 94 or 22.4 per cent the condition was found on inside ceilings.
- 11. Two hundred (200) or 47.6 per cent of the structures had worn, loose and/or missing floors.

- 12. One hundred twenty-five (125) or 29.8 per cent of the structures had sagging and/or pitched floors.
- 13. Two:hundred ninety-seven (297) or 70.3 per cent of the structures had windows which were inoperable or deteriorated.
- 14. Sixty-eight (68) or 23.2 per cent of the structures had inoperable and/or deteriorated control heating systems.
- 15. One hundred twenty-eight (128) or 32.0 per cent of the structures lacked hot running water.
- 16. Eighty-one (81) or 20.2 per cent of the structures (non-residential) had less than one toilet for each eight employees.
- 17. One hundred twenty-nine (129) or 33.1 per cent of the structures had toilet compartments inadequately ventilated.
- 18. Sixty-six or 15.5 per cent of the structures had evident and/or reported vermin infestation, resulting in a health hazard.
- 19. Two hundred sixty-two (262) or 65.8 per cent of the structures had loose, missing and/or deteriorated roof material.
- 20. One hundred forty-eight (148) or 37.0 per cent of the structures had sagging or out-of-line roofs.
- 21. Fifty-four (54) or 56.2 per cent of the structures had penthouse stairs which were worn, sagging and/or deteriorated.
- 22. One hundred thirty-six (136) or 62.3 per cent of the structures had penthouse walls which were cracked, broken and/or deteriorated.
- 23. One hundred thirty-one (131) or 43.2 per cent of the structures had foundation walls which were deteriorated.
- 24. Eighty-seven (87) or 41.1 per cent of the structures had supporting columns and piers which were loose, missing and/or deteriorated.

- 25. Sixty-seven (67) or 29.7 per cent of the structures had split and/or deteriorated framing.
- 26. One hundred thirty (130) or 45.6 per cent of the structures had basement stairs which were deteriorated.
- 27. Eighty-five or 28.5 per cent of the structures contained an accumulation of combustible debris, creating a fire hazard.
- 28. Ninety-nine or 33.6 per cent of the structures had corroded and/or leaking plumbing.
- 29. Two hundred thirty-two (232) or 64.2 per cent of the structures had stairways that were not enclosed, constituting a fire hazard.
- 30. Two hundred eighty-four (284) or 65.5 per cent of the structures had exterior siding which was loose, missing and/or deteriorated.
- 31. One hundred fifty (150) or 34.3 per cent had outside walls which were out of plumb.
- 32. Sixty-five (65) or 40.8 per cent of the structures had foundations which were sinking and/or out of line.
- 33. Two hundred seventy-four (274) or 63.2 per cent of the structures lacked off-street loading facilities, constituting a fire and traffic hazard.
- 34. One hundred eighty-two or 44.2 per cent of the structures lacked two means of egress.
- 35. In recent years studies show that the Project Area has experienced substantial changes in economic and business conditions, and buildings



demolished with no likelihood of replacement.

- a. Assessed valuations for the Project Area totalled about \$25,943,300 in 1950 and about \$22,399,100 in 1962; a decline of approximately 13.6 per cent compared with 7 per cent for the city as a whole.
- b. Since 1938 approximately 28 per cent of the total building area on the wharves has been demolished or burned out.
- c. During the last 40 years, no substantial structures have been built in the Project Area.
- d. Approximately 25 per cent of the total wharf area is now in public parking use.

(The number and percentage of buildings enumerated above under items 7 through 34 is based on the total number of buildings containing the applicable items observed.)

